Monday was the day for recognition of Virginia Tech's senior football players. It was a time of reward for the efforts of four years, a time when accomplishments were totaled up, trophies were given, a time of handshakes and applause. The applause may have been louder in the past four years, but some of the handshakes had more of a note of finality.

Jimmy Sharpe, out of his former job as head coach but who probably never will be out of the spot he holds in the hearts of his players, cited some of the players' accomplishments and gave them a coach's last public farewell. The program was for the players and the coach kept it from turning into a tribute to him although gratitude was expressed by the club as a group and members individually.

Sharpe was asked later if he had any immediate future plans and he said he expected to make an announcement by Wednesday. If he did and if you heard it, some of the preceding is admittedly dated. The coach is not on display and no specific reasons were given for his departure other than a generalization that he had failed to live up to the image of the University. It probably would be naive to think that his 21-22-1 four year record had nothing at all to do with the decision.

Past decisions aside, Virginia Tech football appears to be potentially on the brink of dramatic improvement. Sharpe said earlier that whoever inherits the team inherits a "gold mine."

There were no surprises about which players were honored. Reo Coles on offense, Rick Razzano on defense and the Player of the Year honors shared by the heart of the defensive front wall Bill Houseright and punter George Roberts. Those four got the trophies but the work of others like Henry Bradley also made possible some good moments for the Hokies from his freshman year forward.

The voices of some of those speakers who introduced guests had traces of emotion, again no surprise. Sharpe handled his portion of the program like a winter although at times it wasn't easy.

The chances of a Tech player defection because of the dismissal now apparently have faded but some resentment remains. Some seniors wondered if any new coach can gain the confidence and admiration of the team as Sharpe did and Razzano said of whoever gets the job: "I hope he's a helluva salesman."

Even with the events of the past few weeks there remains solidly based optimism in the Tech football camp although it may be that not all of the smoke will clear until the Hokies host Tulsa in next season's home opening game.

A pendant hung around the coach's neck glistened slightly in the lights set up for the movie film shot by a television station as he stood behind the speakers platform.

The more observant club members and those who shook his hand later may have noticed what ornament was at the end of the chain. By no coincidence at all it was a wishbone.

Fitting Tribute

Sharpe has asked the Tech Athletic Council to authorize an award in memory of freshman fullback Bob Vorhies who died Nov. 21. Sharpe's request, based on a wish expressed by the football team, is to have a Bob Vorhies award presented annually to Tech's premier freshman football player.

This would be a fitting memorial to a young player who had unlimited potential.

No Smiling

Sharpe waved goodbye on the Virginia Tech Football Show on Roanoke's Channel 7 with a touch of class Sunday.

Sharpe showed a review of Tech football progress during his four years as coach, praised some of his top players of the past such as Al Rogers and Billy Hardee and also lauded this year's underclassmen who will be around next season.

There were no recriminations, no regrets, a thank you for the four years that he and his family, he said, would never forget, and that was that.

Sharpe had no definite answer for program host Bill Moss when asked about future plans. Moss closed the program describing Sharpe as "A man who lives the word class every day of his life."